

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the pending application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a readily biodegradable synthetic middle distillate, the process including:
 - (a) separating the products obtained from synthesis gas via the FT synthesis reaction into one or more heavier fraction and ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction, wherein the one or more heavier fraction of step (a) boils above about 270° C, and wherein the lighter fraction boils in the range C₅ to the boiling point of the heavier fraction, and the lighter fraction is separately hydrotreated prior to step (d);
 - (b) catalytically processing the one or more heavier fraction under conditions which yield mainly middle distillates;
 - (c) separating the middle distillate product of step (b) from the lighter product and heavier product that are also produced in step (b); and
 - (d) blending the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof.
2. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydroprocessing step.
3. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydrocracking step.
4. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1[[]], including one or more additional step of fractionating ~~at least some of the one or more~~ the lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, prior to step (d).
- 5-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim ~~[[7]]~~1, wherein the one or more heavier fraction of step (a) boils above about 300°C.
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction boils in the range 160°C to 270°C.
11. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 100°C to 400°C.
12. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 160°C to 370°C.
13. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) is a diesel fuel.
14. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim ~~[[6]]~~12, wherein the product of step (d) is a diesel fuel.
15. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio selected to provide a diesel fuel having a required specification.
16. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 15, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 1:1 and 9:1.

17. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 16, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 2:1 and 6:1.

18. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 17, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of 84:16.

19. (New) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least 60% of the synthetic middle distillate is biodegraded within 28 days as measured by the Carbon Dioxide Evolution method.